

YAVAPAI COUNTY LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA

Geography

Yavapai County encompasses roughly 8,125 square miles, a comparable size to that of New Jersey. The U.S. Forest Service owns 38 percent of the land, while the state of Arizona claims another 25 percent. Individual and corporate ownership amount to 25 percent, and the Yavapai Indian Reservation and public each own less than five tenths of one percent of the land in Yavapai County.

Population

According to the most recent official population figures, produced by AZ DES, Census 2000 figures show 167,517 people reside in Yavapai County. This resident population accounts for slightly more than 3 percent of state of Arizona's total population. In the ten years since the 1990 census, Yavapai County's population grew by nearly 55.5 percent or roughly 4.5 percent annually. Among the county's major cities, Prescott Valley has shown the most significant population growth since 1990—over 164 percent, or greater than 10 percent annualized growth. According to 1990 census figures, Prescott Valley represented slightly more than 8 percent of Yavapai County's entire population, whereas mid-year estimates reveals that share has swelled to 14 percent.

Due to its amiable climate and rural settings Yavapai has become a popular relocation destination for the southern California retirees, which is easily evident in the population growth statistics.

Income

Personal income grew in the county by 98.1 percent from 1990 to 1999 compared to the state's roughly 90 percent growth. Yavapai lags behind the state in the rest of the income figures. The per capita income in calendar year 1999 was \$21,545 compared to the state's \$25,173, or 14.4 percent below the state. The rate of growth of per capita income from 1990 to 1999 was 40.7 percent compared to the state's 46.3 percent. The average earnings per job in 1999 was \$22,378 compared to \$31,307 at the state level.

Labor Force

The Yavapai County labor force grew roughly 1.3 percent each year from 1995 to 2000. Yavapai employment figures grew more, however, with an average annual increase of 1.7 percent. This affected the unemployment rate downward from 4.8 percent in 1995 to 2.8 percent in 2000.

Employment

While the impetus of Yavapai County's growth appears to have been spurred by an in-migration of retirees, future growth will likely arise to support that population and perhaps diversify over time. The trends suggest increasing strength for most service industries such as health services and eating & drinking establishments.

Tourism has and will continue to account for a great deal of economic activity in Yavapai County. Services industry accounts for nearly 30 percent of all nonfarm jobs in Yavapai County. As well, in terms of jobs, trade represents 26 percent of the economy.

Hence, it appears that Yavapai will not remain a predominately retirement community. It will most assuredly evolve through the forces of such an initial impetus growth, supplanting perhaps a resident population, which will have resident needs. Thus, however subtly with each year, the '90s brought about structural change to the industry base, which previously incurred even stronger seasonal effects common with an economy predominately serving tourism.

Yavapai may be one of the counties that benefit from the growth constraints being experienced by the Phoenix-Mesa metropolitan area (MA). As the unrelenting growth of the Phoenix-Mesa MA produces increasing, if not compounding, problems in terms of traffic, crime and pollution, firms looking to relocate will be more willing to investigate areas such as Yavapai County.

Yavapai County's largest industry is services, which employs 15,075 workers. Trade and government come in second and third with 12,850 and 9,725 workers respectively.

Growing and Declining

The largest industry job growth for the year 2000 was experienced in government (+703 jobs), concrete work (+309 jobs), and offices and clinics of medical doctors (+271 jobs). The largest job losses appeared in real estate agents and managers (-217 jobs), highway and street construction (-106 jobs), and miscellaneous equipment rental and leasing (-105 jobs). For further details see the enclosed tables.

Forecast

Research Administration is forecasting employment to grow nearly 1.0 percent in PY 01-02 and another 2.6 percent in PY 02-03. Countywide unemployment is expected to decrease slightly from the PY 00-01 rate of 2.7 percent to 2.6 percent in PY 01-02 and then remain flat at 2.6 percent in PY 02-03.

Issues of Concern

- The growth in Yavapai County runs counter to the reason many residents chose the area; a slower paced Arizona community.
- Restrictively high costs of housing compared to wages in trade and service industries

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security, Research Administration, November 2001.